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## CRITICAL NOTICES.

## PROF. DALMAN ON CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM.

*Christenthum und Judenthum*, von Dr. GUSTAF DALMAN. 1898.

I FEEL very guilty that this most remarkable pamphlet should not have been noticed in the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW at an earlier date. To say the truth, although Dr. Dalman's essay has been in my possession for more than a year, I did not read it till a few days ago. Having read it, I felt it my duty to give an account of it in these columns.

To call the pamphlet *remarkable* is smaller praise than it deserves. Dr. Dalman seems to be a rare exception among the Protestant theologians of Germany. To begin with, he is a first-class authority in Rabbinic. His scientific work has already been quoted with respect by Dr. Schechter as standing quite outside and above the ordinary productions of Christian scholars. He himself is perfectly alive to the faults and inadequacies of the much quoted Weber—the one universal authority among Protestant divines for all matters of Rabbinic theology. In the first part of his important book, *Die Worte Jesu*, he shows his mastery of the Talmudic material. He is far from repeating or believing in the ordinary platitudes about the burdensome law, the horrors of *Nomismus* and the miseries of the Rabbinic religion, so often assumed and dilated on by one self-complacent theologian after another. The unanswered castigation so justly inflicted by Mr. I. Abrahams upon the otherwise monumental work of Schürer would not in the least apply to him. He is an opponent with whom our best and wisest champions might be delighted to cross swords.

Moreover, Dr. Dalman is not merely acquainted with Talmud and Midrash, but he is also familiar with modern Jewish literature. He knows the feelings and opinions of modern Jews, both of the orthodox and reform divisions. And yet this enlightened, unprejudiced, and well-informed man is an earnest evangelical Christian, convinced of the superiority and truth of his own creed, and while quite fair to the other side, an uncompromising exponent of what he believes to be its weakness and deficiencies. A truly remarkable combination.

Dr. Dalman's short pamphlet of twenty-nine pages contains so much that is fair and true (whether absolutely or relatively) that I hope he will give some attention to the few corrections which I shall have to make. Let me now introduce the reader to the contents of his striking *brochure*.

The pamphlet was originally a lecture delivered in Berlin before a Lutheran society. It was intended as a contribution to apologetics. Dr. Dalman says, in words which deserve careful consideration:—

Apologieen verdienen nicht den schlechten Ruf, in welchem sie heutzutage bei vielen stehen. Eine Religion, die damit zufrieden ist, dass sie existiert, und keine Thätigkeit nach aussen hin entfaltet—abwehrend, angreifend, erobernd—wäre wert, vom Schauplatz abzutreten.

In his opening paragraphs the author laments the wonderful ignorance of Judaism which Christians display. The religion which is nearest to Christianity is of all religions the most ignored and despised. It seems to be thought more worth while to study the fetish faith of the Bantus than the faith of the Jews.

Dabei ist die Litteratur der jüdischen Religion in ihrem ganzen Umfang Christen ebenso zugänglich wie Juden. Keine der nichtchristlichen Religionen ist leichter zu studieren. Wer nur eben wissen wollte, was gegenwärtig die Religion der deutschen Juden aller Richtungen ist, könnte sogar aus deutschgeschriebenen Büchern sich hinreichend zuverlässig unterrichten.

Dr. Dalman then proceeds to make some valuable and penetrating remarks on Zionism (whose measure he has pretty accurately taken), and on anti-Semitism. The Jews will clearly remain in Western Europe: they will neither all go to Palestine, nor be driven out by force from their homes, as the more violent anti-Semites would desire. Hence Dr. Dalman thinks that there ought to be a better mutual understanding between Christian and Jew. On his side he desires to show what are the specific differences between the two religions and what are the specific treasures of his own faith. For the Jewish reader the occasion and object of Dr. Dalman's essay are of no particular moment. Its value lies in what he happens to say. But it is interesting to note that Dr. Dalman asks from the Jews the same candid and open pronouncements which he demands from his own side.

Das offene und unverhüllte Auftreten, welches vom Christenthum zu fordern ist, wünschen wir aber auch vom Judenthum. Auf dem Grund gegenseitiger Achtung mit Vermeidung der Hereinziehung alles persönlich Verletzenden muss die Auseinandersetzung erfolgen.

Of course Dr. Dalman as a keen Evangelical who holds that "no other Church possesses fragments of truth which are wanting to his own" believes in proselytizing. But it must be honourably conducted.

Die bürgerliche Gleichberechtigung beider Parteien erscheint mir als unentbehrliche Voraussetzung für einen ehrenhaften Kampf. Der Kampf der russischen Kirche gegen das Judentum mit der Unterstützung einer knechtenden Gesetzgebung, ihre Judenmission unter Polizeibedeckung, ist in Wirklichkeit eine schmachvolle Niederlage für das Christentum.

Our author deplores the fact that the Jews have produced so little literature in which Christians can find profit and enlightenment. He alludes to the enormous work on the Old Testament which has been accomplished by Christian scholars during the last sixty or seventy years. This work has shown (according to our author it has been its *Aufgabe* or purpose) that the history of the Old Testament "culminates" in Christ. The Jews, he says, have produced nothing of importance or value on this subject.

Man sollte doch auf wissenschaftlichem Wege den Beweis führen, dass Christus das Ende des Gesetzes *nicht* ist. Wir würden aus solchen Arbeiten ohne Zweifel fruchtbare Belehrung schöpfen und nützliche Anregung gewinnen, Wahrheit und Wesen der göttlichen Offenbarung noch klarer zu erkennen und gegen Zweifel sicher zu stellen. Von der im Traditionsglauben befangenen jüdischen Orthodoxie ist vielleicht hier wenig Erspriessliches zu erwarten. Aber die jüdische Reform sollte durch derartige Arbeit mehr als bisher erweisen, dass sie nicht nur aufzulösen und niederzureißen vermag, sondern auch zu sammeln und zu bauen.

Here, Dr. Dalman is unintentionally a little unfair. First of all, his contention that the modern Jews have produced nothing of importance upon the Old Testament is far too sweeping. Geiger's *Ursprung und Uebersetzungen*, Kalisch's great Commentary on the Pentateuch, and the works of Graetz, Castelli, Maybaum, and others, prove incontestably the exaggeration of Dr. Dalman's statement. Its measure of truth I admit and deplore. Yet when our author goes on to mix up with it a complaint that the Jews have furnished no scientific proof that "Christ is *not* the end of the Law," he seems to me to confound together two totally different things. It was not the business of Kalisch's Commentary on the Pentateuch to show that Christ was not the end of the Law, any more than it was Dillmann's business in *his* commentary to show that he was. The matter lies outside scientific exegesis, and I must deny that it has been or is the "*Aufgabe*" of Old Testament science to show that the history of the Old Testament does (or does not) "culminate in Christ" (*in Christum mündet*).

On the other hand, a good scientific presentation of modern Judaism is, I admit, a desideratum. Its mere negative defence is less interesting, and requires constant revision. For in the sense in which to orthodox Christian theologians of a hundred years ago Christ was

the "end" of the Law, he is no longer the "end" to theologians of the modern schools. In fact the kind of "end" which he is supposed to have been has frequently shifted; in what precise sense Dr. Dalman supposes that he was the end, I am not wholly sure.

It is at the close of p. 14 that Dr. Dalman proceeds to put the question on which the rest of his pamphlet depends. "What are the points of value which we Christians possess in our religion beyond the Jews, the defence of which is therefore our duty?"

Was sind die Güter, welche wir Christen in unserer Religion vor den Juden voraus haben, deren Verteidigung somit uns obliegt?

It is in reply to this question that our author proceeds to clear away a number of "erroneous conceptions" as to the relation of Judaism and Christianity to one another. To begin with he discusses the frequent view that Jewish orthodoxy represents "faith," Jewish reform "unbelief," and that therefore Christianity is nearer to the former than to the latter.

Dr. Dalman's remarks on this show fairness, knowledge, and a very surprising degree of accuracy.

(1) Die jüdische Reform ist keine Reformation in unserem Sinne, aber ein an sich durchaus achtungswerter Versuch, dem Judentum durch Befreiung desselben aus seiner gesetzlichen und formalistischen Schale eine Gestalt zu geben, welche sich mit unserer von Wirkungen des Christentums durchzogenen Kulturwelt verträgt.

(2) Orthodoxy und Reform sind, wenn auch in verschiedener Richtung, von dem, was uns als ächter Glaube gilt, gleich weit entfernt. Sie nehmen deshalb zum Christentum, soweit sie es kennen—was oft sehr wenig der Fall ist—in Wesentlichen dieselbe Stellung ein. Die Achtungsprädikate, welche das reformerische Judentum im Einklang mit manchen Namenchristen der Person Jesu gelegentlich zuerteilt, verhüllen den wirklichen Thatbestand nur dem Unkundigen.

These quotations are full of insight. Not less interesting are the remarks in which it is shown that Christianity and Judaism cannot be differentiated as New Testament and Old Testament respectively. Dr. Dalman holds that in neither of its two main forms is Judaism the religion of the Old Testament.

Die Orthodoxy basiert auf der talmudischen Tradition der nachchristlichen Zeit und ist deshalb in vieler Beziehung jüngeren Ursprungs als das Christentum. Die Reform ist oder will sein die fortgeschrittenste Gestalt der jüdischen Religion; sie sieht in der mittelalterlichen Religionsphilosophie, weiterhin im Talmudismus frühere Phasen der Entwicklungsgeschichte dieser Religion, deren Ende sie ist. Wie die Orthodoxy das Alte Testament nach der rabbinischen Tradition beurteilt, so macht die Reform im Grunde ihr eigenes jüdisch-religiöses Denken zum Masse des Alten Testaments. Somit steht im Christentum das Neue Testament für

die Juden nicht dem Alten, wohl aber der talmudischen Tradition und dem modern-jüdischen Denken gegenüber.

All this is perfectly accurate. My only doubt is as to the sense of the word "*Ende*" at the close of the second sentence. Jewish reform does not look upon itself as the absolute and final form of Judaism and of religion. That is one of the fundamental reasons why we object to the claims of orthodox Christianity. There is and there can be no such thing as finality in religion. An absolute religion is a human impossibility. Perhaps I may just incidentally add here that the real reason why Jews will never become Christians (except a few here and there) is connected with this very matter. From the old orthodox point of view the argument has broken down altogether. Every modern commentary admits that the Jews were perfectly right in maintaining that the stock passages in Genesis, in Isaiah, in the Psalms, do *not* refer to Christ. Every modern commentary admits that when the Law speaks of "eternal" statutes, it means what it says. If, on the other hand, the Old Testament is looked at from the modern point of view, the case for orthodox Christianity is far worse. The Jew will not abandon the accuracy and the miracles of the Old Testament, and yet accept the miracles and the accuracy of the New. He may become a Unitarian; he will never become a Lutheran, an Anglican, a Roman Catholic, or any other of the many opposing exponents of orthodox Christianity. But this is a digression, and has nothing to do with the value and excellence of Dr. Dalman's work.

Just as the mere contrast of Old Testament and New Testament is misleading, so is it also inaccurate to describe Christianity as the religion of the other world, Judaism as the religion of this world. Dr. Dalman points out that by the time of Jesus the doctrine of the Resurrection had become a recognized dogma of official Judaism, which it has ever since remained, though it is now being largely supplanted by the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. Our author, however, is not quite so accurate as usual when he says:—

Doch geht daneben her eine unverkennbare diesseitige Tendenz der religiösen Anschauung. Die Sabbathsfeier der Orthodoxie hat zu einem wesentlichen Teile ihres Inhalts irdischen Genuss. Die Feier von Neujahr und Versöhnungstag, nach der Idee, welche das altgläubige Judenthum damit verbindet, stärkt die Todesfurcht, statt sie zu mildern oder aufzuhaben. Aus Besorgnis in asketische Tendenzen zu geraten, vermag auch die Reform oft nicht, dem Jenseits die Betonung zu geben, welche nach seiner eigenen Theorie ihm zukäme.

Here the criticism on the observance of the Sabbath rests on a natural misapprehension. If Dr. Dalman will take the trouble to

read Dr. Schechter's articles scattered through this REVIEW, he will become better informed. The Jewish conception of the Sabbath is particularly difficult for an outsider fully to understand. The remark as to the effect of the New Year and the Day of Atonement is a great surprise to me. It is certainly the very first time I ever heard of such a thing, and I cannot but doubt the accuracy of the statement. Any member of the faith which has sent such thousands of Jews to death should recognize that Judaism, whatever errors it may contain, does at least produce among its votaries a readiness for martyrdom and for death. But our author's sly hit at *Reform* teaching is exceedingly ingenious and acute, and deserves to be most seriously taken to heart by those whom it may concern.

Equally inaccurate, says our author, is the differentiation of Christianity and Judaism as the religion of Love and the religion of Hate. Dr. Dalman's statements on this point, his clear, sharp criticism of the Talmudic position, his frank avowal of the great advance in universalism made by modern Judaism, are all completely accurate.

In unserem Jahrhundert hat wenigstens unser westeuropäisches Judentum unter dem Eindrucke der humanen Zeitströmung—und zwar in allen seinen Parteien—den Grundsatz der allgemeinen Menschenliebe ebenso nach innen wie nach aussen proklamiert. Das ist als ein bedeutsamer Fortschritt anzuerkennen. In diesem allgemeinen Prinzip stimmen Judentum und Christentum jetzt in der That überein.

On the other hand, there is an important difference observable between Judaism and Christianity in their attitude towards the outcast and the sinner. To a considerable extent Dr. Dalman is right. I fear that he has not done me the honour to read any words of mine, but if he had, he would have found that two years before his lecture was published I had anticipated him on this very point. As a German, Dr. Dalman would rub his eyes in incredulous amazement at a Jew being made honorary president of a Protestant Theological Society; yet this was the position which in the year 1895 I was appointed to fill in regard to the *Theological Society of the University of Glasgow*. We do these things in Britain. In my Presidential Address I ventured to ask which characteristics or qualities of the Higher Theism of to-day were specifically due to Judaism, and which to Christianity. I there said:—

The yearning pity for the sinner and the outcast, the humility of the true saver of souls, who, while never ceasing to accentuate the horror of sin, bridges over and even annuls the moral chasm between the basest criminal and himself, have been delightful characteristics of both the two great branches of Christianity in their highest and purest forms<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *J. Q. R.*, vol. VIII (January, 1896), p. 215.

Here, then, I agree with Dr. Dalman that we have to learn from Jesus. But the lesson can be learnt without believing that Jesus was God, or that his body rose out of the tomb in which it had been buried. Moreover, and here Dr. Dalman has really something new to hear—*the lesson is being learnt*. Dr. Dalman says—

Dem Judentum fehlt es nicht an Wohlthätigkeit, auch über den Kreis der Volksgenossen hinaus. Es hat aber nichts, was den christlichen Veranstaltungen zur Rettung der Verlorenen, was unserer inneren und äussernen Mission entspräche, und es kann derartiges nicht haben, weil es an Liebe fehlt.

Whether it squares with our author's theories or not, this sentence is already inaccurate. The necessity has arisen for these institutions, and with the necessity the institutions are being founded. For instance, in England we have a society which is very well known to, and works in harmony with, Christian societies of a similar kind. In England, at any rate, this co-operation in humanitarian work seems perfectly natural and obvious. But the workers at this society, who, with their Christian brothers and sisters, attempt to rescue the fallen and to save those who may be tottering on the brink, are, and intend to remain, Jews. It is Judaism, teaching them the love of God and of man, which prompts them to deeds of pity and of love, and no other religious force whatever. And so with similar efforts which are, I believe, being made in other lands. Judaism is quite able to absorb the teaching of Jesus on this matter without believing, any more than he himself believed, in his co-substantiality and co-eternity with the divine Father. It has, alas, become necessary to absorb it, and fair critics like Dr. Dalman, who remind us of remediable defects, are of great value in stimulating us onwards. It is quite true that there was a touch of asperity in Talmudic Judaism, a lack of sympathy and of love for the fallen and the outcast. Our own workers in England have heard it often said: "We Jewish girls have less chance of retrieving ourselves after one false step, because many Jewish parents are so harsh and unforgiving." This must be changed. It must again and again be impressed upon the community that such parents are far more guilty in the eyes of man and of God than their unfortunate daughters. The sinner, too often more sinned against than sinning, must be sharply distinguished from her sin. For her sin there must be hate; for her a conquering and redeeming love.

Our author next proceeds to discuss the current descriptions of Judaism and of Christianity as the religion of *works* and the religion of *faith*. He is quite well acquainted with the vulgar Jewish conception of Christianity as a religion the essence of which consists in

a number of irrational dogmas, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and Justification by Faith. He well points out that the *true* evangelical faith can no more remain without works than it is possible for a child, who with his whole heart clings and yearns to his father, not to show to that father a loyal and active obedience. But when Dr. Dalman says that this evangelical faith is wanting to the Jews, it is really only a question of words. The Jewish faith in and love of God are just as vital and just as productive of pure life and holy deeds as the Christian faith in Christ and his Father.

Dr. Dalman would seem to imply that the Jewish attitude towards sin is rather superficial. He describes it thus: "The Jew knows of divine forbearance towards human weakness, and he hopes for God's forgiveness of his sins. He holds that God, who created man as a sensuous being [i.e. liable to sin], must obviously (*selbstverständlich*) be indulgent and ready to forgive." *C'est son métier*, as Heine said. I am not sure that Dr. Dalman has not quite correctly expressed the prevailing Jewish attitude. And it seems to me quite as consonant with the divine perfection as the cumbrous theory of divine forgiveness invented by orthodox Christianity. Neither of us can ever know the ways of God, though haply after death we may learn whether the Jewish theory or Dr. Dalman's is less remote from reality.

But it is curious that our usually so accurate and well-informed author should fall into the blunder of saying that the Jew hopes to be "saved" by his own reason and power.

Die Juden haben von der Güte der menschlichen Natur eine, wie sie glauben, berechtigte vorteilhaftere Meinung und sind überzeugt, dass der Mensch sich selbst zu helfen vermöge. Aus eigener Vernunft und Kraft wollen sie selig werden.

If this were true, where would be the necessity for God's forgiveness and indulgence? Nor is this all. The Jew believes in God's gracious help on earth. "Create in us a new heart, O Lord." "Lead us not into the power of sin." "Subdue our inclination that it may submit itself unto thee." "O put it into our hearts to fulfil in love all the words of thy law." Are these the prayers of men who hold that by their own power and reason they can be "saved"?

This question of sin leads Dr. Dalman to his final assertion that the true difference between Jews and Christians is that the latter believe in the Son of God, who died for the sins of man, while the former do not. Nothing can be fairer than this. Equally accurate is our author's incidental remark that to say that the Jews believe in a future Messiah, whereas the Christians believe that he has already come, obscures an essential feature. For not only do many Jews no longer believe in a future Messiah at all, but the Messianic age has

always been more important to Judaism than the Messiah's person and individuality. "The personal Messiah is no necessary element of the Jewish religion.

Dr. Dalman makes the very odd statement that the Jews are not really able to do without a mediator after all. "For all Jews," he says, "Moses is a unique (*einzigartiger*) mediator between God and his people." I cannot understand this at all. It is utterly strange to me. Would it be so incomprehensible and so novel if there were any truth in it? I can assure Dr. Dalman that Moses is in no sense whatever the mediator between God and the Jew. What Jew when he prays to his "Father in heaven" ever thinks of Moses? Why should he think of Moses? Moses can neither help nor hinder the communion of man with God. I feel confident that this is not only my belief, but the belief of every Jew.

Finally, in a few candid and moderate words, Dr. Dalman discusses the value of Jewish *Unitarianism*. Here I will not follow him, as the subject is beyond the limits of a review. But I must protest against the following:—

Dem Einzig-Einen des Judentums kann man wohl mit scheuer Ehrfurcht und mit Hingebung dienen. Aber ein Verhältniss zu ihm wie das des Kindes zum Vater ist schwer denkbar.

Well, this is just one of those assertions that can neither be proved or disproved—*on paper*. Those who best know Jewish life, literature, and history, will best realize its inaccuracy. Christian Unitarians as well as Jews will agree with me that one need not believe in the Incarnation or the Trinity in order to love God, in order to feel towards him the relation of child to father. These "not easily conceivable" statements are very dangerous. It is "not easily conceivable" that any religion which taught eternal punishment could also have taught the love of God, and yet we know that the two doctrines, apparently so inconsistent, have often gone hand in hand. Let Dr. Dalman then not suppose that because we do not conceive of God as he does, that therefore we do not love "our Father who is in Heaven."

Dr. Dalman says that the argument has been used: "The God to whom man draws nigh without a mediator is surely the nearer," and he rebuts this argument by an appeal to facts. Among Christians, he says, those are not the most religious who place Christ's position lowest. And so in Judaism. Jewish religious literature, Jewish sermons, Jewish worship, give him the impression of coldness, emptiness, desolation. That confirms his opinion: the nearer to Christ, the nearer to God. Against a subjective impression of this kind there is nothing to be said. But can the outsider accurately gauge

the religious feelings of others? Moreover, to make religious warmth (whether apparent or even real) a test of religious truth seems to me a very dangerous argument. A decorous congregation at a church might show less "warmth" than a Salvation Army Corps. But does that prove that the doctrine of the Salvation Army is truer? Though I sit still and silent in synagogue, I am not prepared to say that I have less religious warmth than a worshipper at an old-fashioned *Cheder*. Or if he has more "warmth," I perhaps have more "truth." If some travellers are to be believed, the most "religious" people are neither Christians nor Jews. By "religious" they mean religious to the eye and ear. But this again is not a necessarily correct test of religious truth. Even if Christianity with its human God did produce greater religious warmth than Judaism in the best sense of the word, that is no convincing proof of its greater truth. Jewish monotheism *may* conceivably need a greater religious capacity for all its height and depth to be realized. Even if (which I must deny) it could be proved that the average man is more likely to feel God near *with* the belief in the Incarnation than without it, I cannot see that this would be any rigid proof of the Incarnation's truth. God brings men and women to him in divers ways and fashions; he makes use of half lights and illusions and errors. Surely we must all admit that, each for our own ends and from a different basis. But to pursue this line of thought, fascinating though it be, would take too long and lead too far.

Meanwhile, a Jewish reviewer cannot be too grateful for Dr. Dalman's essay. He cannot rate too highly his fairmindedness, impartiality, and friendly feeling. I wish he would come to England, and we would show him practically how Jews and Christians respect each other, and how they work together in common service for humanity and for God.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.

#### M. D. CONWAY'S "SOLOMON."

*Solomon and Solomonic Literature.* By MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY.  
(Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co.)

"LIKE to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices" might have been adopted by Dr. Conway as a motto, describing the method pursued in his book. As he careers gaily from one book of the Old Testament to another, or to Gospels and Epistles, or to Zoroaster and the Zend-Avesta, or to India, and Vishnu, and